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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

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Letter dated 24 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to update you on the latest incidents in the Palestinian campaign of terrorism directed against the citizens of Israel.

At approximately 9.30 p.m. (local time) on 23 May, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowded location in the centre of the Israeli city of Rishon Lezion at an hour when the area was filled with shoppers and pedestrians. The terrorist approached a group of elderly people playing chess and detonated a powerful explosion that ripped through a popular outdoor promenade, killing two Israelis — Gary Targinyanski, age 65, and Elmar Dejavrialov, age 16 — and wounding more than 40 others. The bomb was packed with nails and other materials to maximize the pain and suffering of its victims. this bombing comes barely two weeks after another suicide bombing killed 15 Israelis and wounded more than 60 in a pool hall in Rishon Lezion, in an incident referred to in my later dated 8 May 2002 (A/56/940-S/2002/533).

In a separate incident, a bomb hidden by Palestinian terrorists under a fuel truck exploded at the Pi Glilot petroleum and gas storage facility in Herzliya yesterday. It appear that the bomb was detonated remotely by cellular telephone. Some 3,000 tons of gas are stored at this facility, one of Israel's largest, located just north of Tel Aviv. It is clear that the terrorists sought not only to inflict a massive civilian catastrophe, but a severe environmental one as well. The fire was quickly extinguished and no casualties were reported. There has been no claim of responsibility.

In addition, there have been numerous incidents of attempted terrorist attacks that have been thwarted by Israeli security. Virtually every day, a number of attacks are prevented by Israeli forces or by alert civilians. Early this morning, a suicide bomber attempted to blow up a car filled with explosives near the entrance to a Tel Aviv nightclub. He was prevented from doing so by a nearby security guard and his explosives detonated prematurely. Five Israeli civilians were wounded. In a statement, the Al Aqsa Brigades, the terrorist wing of Chairman Arafat's own Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the "heroic" blast.

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Two days ago, on 22 May, a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up at an intersection near Jenin. On his body, security forces found missile residue, a gun, a telescope, a metal net, building material, a battery, electrical wires and an explosive device — all clear evidence of his intention to carry out a terrorist attack against Israelis.

Israel Defense Forces has also foiled an attempt to mimic the World Trade Center Attack by carrying out a massive bombing at the Azrieli Towers skyscraper complex in Tel Aviv. Security forces that raided a location where the perpetrators were preparing the attack discovered a booby-trapped vehicle packed with 1,000 kilograms of explosives. The Azrieli Center — a shopping complex that includes offices, a hotel, cinemas, an amphitheatre, and a shopping mall — is housed in 50-story towers that are among the tallest buildings in Israel.

These incidents are merely the latest in the continuing campaign of Palestinian terrorism that has been detailed in letters dated 8 May 2002 (A/56/940-S/2002/533), 1 May 2002 (A/56/936-S/2002/503), 12 April 2002 (A/56/909-S/2002/415), 10 April 2002 (A/56/912-S/2002/373), 1 April 2002 (A/56/895-S/2002/337), 27 March 2002 (A/56/891-S/2002/322), 26 March 2002 (A/56/889-S/2002/315), 18 March 2002 (A/56/880-S/2002/293), 14 March 2002 (A/56/876-S/2002/280), 11 March 2002 (A/56/867-S/2002/257), 8 March 2002 (A/56/864-S/2002/252), 5 March 2002 (A/56/857-S/2002/233), 4 March 2002 (A/56/854-S/2002/222), 27 February 2002 (A/56/843-S/2002/208), 20 February 2002 (A/56/828-S/2002/185), 19 February 2002 (A/56/824-S/2002/174), 11 February 2002 (A/56/819-S/2002/164), 8 February 2002 (A/56/814-S/2002/155), 28 January 2002 (A/56/798-S/2002/126), 22 January 2002 (A/56/788-S/2002/104), 18 January 2002 (A/56/781-S/2002/86), 16 January 2002 (A/56/774-S/2002/73), 11 January 2002 (A/56/771-S/2002/47), 4 January 2002 (A/56/766-S/2002/25), 13 December 2001 (A/56/706-S/2001/1198), 4 December 2001 (A/56/678-S/2001/1150), 30 November 2001 (A/56/670-S/2001/1141), 27 November 2001 (A/56/663-S/2001/1121), 12 November 2001 (A/56/617-S/2001/1071), 5 November 2001 (A/56/604-S/2001/1048), 24 October 2001 (A/56/506-S/2001/1011), 19 October 2001 (A/56/492-S/2001/990), 17 October 2001 (A/56/483-S/2001/975), 8 October 2001 (A/56/450-S/2001/948), 5 October 2001 (A/56/444-S/2001/943), 3 October 2001 (A/56/438-S/2001/938), 24 September 2001 (A/56/406-S/2001/907), 20 September 2001 (A/56/386-S/2001/892), 17 September 2001 (A/56/367-S/2001/875), 7 September 2001 (A/56/346-S/2001/858), 4 September 2001 (A/56/331-S/2001/840), 30 August 2001 (A/56/325-S/2001/834), 27 August 2001 (A/56/324-S/2001/825), 13 August 2001 (A/56/294-S/2001/787), 9 August 2001 (A/56/286-S/2001/780), 8 August 2001 (A/56/280-S/2001/775), 6 August 2001 (A/56/272-S/2001/768), 27 July 2001 (A/56/225-S/2001/743), 26 July 2001 (A/56/223-S/2001/737), 17 July 2001 (A/56/201-S/2001/706), 13 July 2001 (A/56/184-S/2001/696), 3 July 2001 (A/56/138-S/2001/662), 2 July 2001 (A/56/131-S/2001/656), 21 June 2001 (A/56/119-S/2001/619), 19 June 2001 (A/56/98-S/2001/611), 18 June 2001 (A/56/97-S/2001/604), 13 June 2001 (A/56/92-S/2001/585), 11 June 2001 (A/56/91-S/2001/580), 4 June 2001 (A/56/85-S/2001/555), 30 May 2001 (A/56/81-S/2001/540), 25 May 2001 (A/56/80-S/2001/524), 18 May 2001 (A/56/78-S/2001/506), 11 May 2001 (A/56/72-S/2001/473), 9 May 2001 (A/56/69-S/2001/459), 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-

S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

The Government of Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman fully responsible for these incidents. The Palestinian leadership has still failed to take concerted action against terrorist groups that operate in its territory, to arrest their leadership, to refrain from inciting violence and promoting hatred of Israel and the Jewish people, and to collect illegal weapons. Moreover, Chairman Arafat has taken to issuing condemnations for attacks for which his own forces are responsible, such that a situation now exists whereby Fatah terrorists carry out an attack and the head of Fatah, namely Chairman Arafat, condemns the same attack. This is true of both the terror attack in Rishon Lezion and the attempted nightclub bombing in Tel Aviv, both of which are described above. For there to be any credibility associated with the Palestinian leadership's condemnations of terrorist attacks, it must be backed up with genuine action aimed at bringing such attacks to an end.

The same is true with regard to the terrorist organization Hamas, which continues to operate in the Gaza Strip with nearly complete freedom. The leaders of this group — which has been recognized by the European Union, the United States, and other States as a terrorist organization — have still not been arrested and are actively encouraging, organizing and carrying out acts of terror against Israelis. On 19 May, Abd Al'aziz Rantisi, one of the senior Hamas leaders who resides freely in Gaza together with other operatives, gave an interview to the Al Hayat newspaper in which he pledged that Hamas would continue its campaign of suicidal terror against Israel. He further stated that the national and Islamic forces — which include Chairman Arafat's own Fatah faction, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and other organizations — were on the verge of issuing a document declaring the "right" of the Palestinian people to engage in violence against Israeli citizens.

All efforts to return the parties to a productive and peaceful process of dialogue and negotiations are threatened by the actions of Hamas, the Al Aqsa Brigades, and other Palestinian terrorist groups. Their declared intention to continue terrorist attacks against Israel, and the abject refusal of the Palestinian Authority to take any real steps that would prevent them from doing so, imperils any chance to conclude a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Israel calls upon the international community to exert maximum pressure on the Palestinian leadership and compel it to use the security forces at its disposal in fulfilling its commitment to fight terror. This must include dismantling the terrorist infrastructure, arresting known terrorists, bringing an immediate end to incitement and the glorification of terror and suicide, and helping to pave the way for a return to a viable political process.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative